



HV
5068
.H8



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

[FORCE COLLECTION.]

Chap. HV 5068

Shelf H 8

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





No. 300.

DEBATES

OF

CONSCIENCE,

WITH

A DISTILLER, WHOLESALE DEALER,

AND

A RETAILER.

BY HEMAN HUMPHREY, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF AMHERST COLLEGE.



PUBLISHED BY THE

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

NO 50 NASSAU-STREET, NEW-YORK.

D. Fanshaw, *Printer.*

THE RUM DRINKING CHRISTIAN.

The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.—2 *Kings*, 5 : 18.

THIS was the petition of Naaman the Syrian, for the liberty of indulgence in a point where God and conscience condemned him. It is the prayer of many Christians, thus desiring some forbidden indulgence. It is the prayer of the rum drinking Christian.

1. I shall show *who the rum drinking Christian is*. He is not the drunkard; for the drunkard is no Christian.

He is not the hard drinker; though some professed Christians, to their shame be it said, are hard drinkers.

He is the Christian professing to drink temperately; priding himself on a prudent use of destructive poison.

He is a man of good reputation in society; and of regular standing in the church. He would sooner sacrifice all his property than be seen drunk. He deplores the immoralities of society; is constant in his attendance on divine institutions, and rejoices in the conversion of sinners and the spread of the Gospel—but he drinks rum, especially when engaged in any hard labor, as haying and harvesting. He cannot go into the field, or engage in fishing, ship building, or in mechanical employment, without this or some other intoxicating liquor. When he comes home, he takes it to create an appetite. When he is wet, to keep him from a cold. When attending the sick, to ward off fevers. He gives it to his wife and children, and visitants and laborers, but always *prudently*; resolving to be temperate in all things. Such is the rum drinking Christian.

2. He pursues a practice *condemned by God and conscience*.

Against nothing does God in his word more solemnly warn his people than intoxicating liquor. "Who hath wo? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine." The wine is an intoxicating liquor; and God says, in view of its tremendous effects, not, use it prudently, but, look

not upon it, avoid it, turn from it as the destroyer of the soul, for, *at the last, it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.* Again, "It is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink, lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted." Entire abstinence is here enjoined upon all rulers. Why? Because strong drink clouds the mind, destroys the perception and the sense of right and wrong, hardens the heart, and perverts the judgment; and it is for the same reason the duty of all men, that they may in perfect sobriety discharge all their obligations. In what stronger terms than are used throughout the sacred pages, could God say to his people, Touch not, taste not, handle not?

The *Providence of God* sometimes furnishes rules of action clear as his word. Whatever the general good requires, we are bound to do. Whatever the salvation of souls demand, we must sacrifice. Now, through the prevalence of intemperance, our country is on the brink of ruin. The church is in danger of being paralyzed in all her efforts. Thousands of families are reduced to degradation and wretchedness; and thousands of souls are plunging into eternal wo. Fifty millions of gallons of distilled spirits are drunk in the United States every year; (how great a portion of it by professed Christians, who can tell!) and no less than 130,000 drunkards stagger in the streets of the nation every day. This tremendous evil every man is called, in the providence of God, to help check and suppress. But the common sense of mankind decides that it can be checked and suppressed only by the entire disuse of ardent spirit in the religious and moral community. Every man therefore is required, in the providence of God, to practise entire abstinence himself, and to cease giving strong drink to others. The Christian who does not do it, who drinks daily himself, and puts the bottle to his neighbor's mouth, acts in defiance of the word and providence of God; I add,

He acts against the remonstrance of his own *conscience*. Hundreds of once rum drinking, but now consistent Christians, acknowledge that it was once so with them, while they periodically stimulated, and while they gave brandy and spirit to others. And the consciences of men act with great uniformity on such points. Once, indeed, the consciences of good men were little disturbed on the subject;

for but little light was thrown upon such subjects. But Christians are no longer blind. They have light. They see the evil, and the extent of intemperance; and the remedy lies before them; and now conscience must act; and if they will set at defiance the warnings of God and the efforts of the temperate through the land, it must condemn them.

3. The rum drinking Christian *pleads for this practice as useful and necessary*. Though it is fully shown from facts and the testimony of the experienced, that even a little strong drink is unnecessary and dangerous, he pleads that he cannot labor without it; that his strength will fail him; that it makes him feel better; that he has more enjoyment of his food, and better sleep; that he cannot get men to labor for him without it; that he will be unpopular in withholding it; and that a prudent use can do no harm: and though he knows that his practice is condemned by the word and providence of God, yet so powerfully does the world and appetite plead, that he says, "*The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.*"

Let the churches awake to a sense of the tremendous evil fostered in their bosoms. It is not enough that they expel drunkards from their communion; they must mark their rum drinkers of every degree. Multitudes without, who make no pretensions to personal piety, have banished ardent spirit from their use as detestable and ruinous; and the line must be drawn within the church, as it never has been, between the temperate and the intemperate; between him who is willing to deny himself and take up the cross, and him who pleads, *The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing*. If Paul said, he would not eat meat if it caused his brother to perish; if we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren, then let every Christian renounce his profession who will not in this day give up drinking ardent spirit. Ministers and churches, the voice of God calls loudly to you to "touch not, taste not, handle not," that through your example the world may be saved.

Orders for Tracts will receive prompt attention, if addressed to "*The American Tract Society, No. 150 Nassau-street, New-York.*"

DEBATES OF CONSCIENCE

WITH A

Distiller, a Wholesale Dealer, and a Retailer.

BY HEMAN HUMPHREY, D. D.

President of Amherst College.

DIALOGUE I.

At the Distillery.

FIRST INTERVIEW.

Distiller. Good morning, Mr. Conscience; though I know you to be one of the earliest risers, especially of late, I hardly expected to meet you here at day dawn.

Conscience. I am none too early, it seems, to find you at your vocation. But how are you going to dispose of this great black building?

Distiller. Why, I do not understand you?

Conscience. What are you doing with these boiling craters, and that hideous worm there?

Distiller. Pray explain yourself.

Conscience. Whose grain is that? and what is bread called in the Bible?

Distiller. More enigmatical still!

Conscience. To what market do you mean to send that long row of casks? and how many of them will it take, upon an average, to dig a drunkard's grave?

Distiller. Ah, I understand you now. I was hoping that I had quieted you on that score. But, I perceive you have come upon the old errand. You intend to read me another

lecture upon the sixth commandment. But what would you have me do?

Conscience. Put out these fires!

Distiller. Nay, but hear me. I entered into this business with your approbation. The neighbors all encouraged me. My brethren in the church said it would open a fine market for their rye, and corn, and cider; and even my minister, happening to come along when we were raising, took a little with us under the shade, and said he loved to see his people industrious and enterprising.

Conscience. "The times of this ignorance God winked at—but now commandeth all men, every where, to repent." In one part of your defence, at least, you are incorrect. It was not my *voice*, but my *silence*, if any thing, which gave consent; and I have always suspected there was some foul play in the matter, and that I was kept quiet for the time by certain deleterious opiates. Indeed, I distinctly recollect the morning bitters and evening toddy, which you was accustomed to give me; and though I thought but little of it then, I now see that it deadened all my sensibilities. This, I am aware, is no excuse. I ought to have resisted—I ought to have refused, and to have paralyzed the hand which put the cup to my lips. And when you struck the first stroke on this ground, I ought to have warned you off with the voice of seven thunders. That I did not then speak out, and do my duty, will cause me extreme regret and self-reproach to the latest hour of my life.

Distiller. But what, my dear Conscience, has made you all at once so much wiser, not only than your former self, but than hundreds of enlightened men in every community, whose piety was never doubted? I myself know, and have heard of not a few good Christians, including even deacons and elders, who still continue to manufacture ardent spirit, and think, or seem to think it right.

Conscience. And think it right! Ask their consciences.

I should like to witness some of those interviews which take place in the night, and which make Christian distillers—(what a solecism!)—so much more irritable than they used to be. I know one of the brotherhood, at least, whose conscience has been goading him these five years, and yet he perseveres.

Distiller. But if I stop, what will the people do? Half the farmers in town depend upon their rye and cider to pay their taxes, and even to support the Gospel!

Conscience. So then, you are pouring out these streams of liquid death over the land, and burning up your own neighbors, to enable them to pay their taxes and support religion! Why don't you set up a coffin factory, to create a brisker demand for lumber, and induce people to die faster, so as on the one hand to help them pay their taxes, and on the other to give you a fair profit, by increasing your business! It will not do. I tell you, that I can give you no peace till you put out these fires and destroy that worm.

Distiller. How can I? Here is all my living, especially since, as you know, my eldest son fell into bad habits, in spite of all the good advice I daily gave him, and squandered what might have afforded me a comfortable independence.

Conscience. Suppose you was now in Brazil, and the owner of a large establishment to fit out slave traders with hand-cuffs for the coast of Africa, and could not change your business without considerable pecuniary sacrifice; would you make the sacrifice; or would you keep your fires and hammers still going?

Distiller. Why do you ask such puzzling questions? You know I don't like them at all, especially when my mind is occupied with other subjects. Leave me, at least till I can compose myself, I beseech you.

Conscience. Nay, but hear me through. Is it right for you to go on manufacturing fevers, dropsy, consumption, &c.

lirium tremens, and a host of other frightful diseases, because your property happens to be vested in a distillery? Is it consistent with the great law of love by which you profess to be governed? Will it bear examination in a dying hour? Shall I bid you look back upon it from the brink of eternity, that you may from such recollections gather holy courage for your pending conflict with the king of terrors? Will you bequeath this magazine of wrath and perdition to your only son not already ruined, and go out of the world rejoicing that you can leave the whole concern in the hands of one who is so trust-worthy and so dear?

[*Here the Distiller leaves abruptly, without answering a word.*]

SECOND INTERVIEW.

Distiller. (*Seeing Conscience approach, and beginning to tremble.*) What, so soon and so early at your post again? I did hope for a short respite.

Conscience. O, I am distressed—I cannot hold my peace. I am pained at my very heart.

Distiller. Do be composed, I beseech you, and hear what I have to say. Since our last interview I have resolved to sell out, and I expect the purchaser on in a very few days.

Conscience. What will *he* do with the establishment when he gets it?

Distiller. You must ask him and not me. But whatever he may do with it, *I* shall be clear.

Conscience. I wish I could be sure of that; but let us see. Though you will not make poison by the hundred barrels any longer yourself, you will sell this laboratory of death to another man, for the same horrid purpose! You will not, with your own hands, go on forging daggers for maniacs to use upon themselves and their friends, provided you can get some one to take your business at a fair price! You

will no longer drag the car of Juggernaut over the bodies of prostrate devotees, if you can *sell out the privilege to good advantage!*

Distiller. Was ever any man's conscience so captious before? You seem determined not to be satisfied with any thing. But beware; by pushing matters in this way you will produce a violent "reaction." Even professors of religion will not bear it. For myself, I wish to treat you with all possible respect; but forbearance itself must have its limits.

Conscience. Possibly you may be able to hold me in check a little longer; but I am all the while gathering strength for an onset, which you cannot withstand; and if you cannot bear these kind remonstrances now, how will you grapple with "the worm that never dies?"

Distiller. Enough, enough. I will obey your voice. But why so pale and death-like?

Conscience. O, I am sick, I am almost suffocated. These tartarean fumes, these dreadful forebodings, these heart-rending sights, and above all, my horrid dreams, I cannot endure them. There comes our nearest neighbor, stealing across the lots, with his jug and half bushel of rye. What is his errand, and where is his hungry, shivering family? And see there too, that tattered, half-starved boy, just entering the yard with a bottle—who sent him here at this early hour? All these barrels—where are the wretched beings who are to consume this liquid fire, and to be consumed by it?

Distiller. Spare me, spare me, I beseech you. By going on at this rate a little longer you will make me as nervous as yourself.

Conscience. But I cannot close this interview till I have related one of the dreams to which I just alluded. It was only last night that I suffered in this way, more than tongue can tell. The whole terrific vision is written in letters of

fire upon the tablet of my memory; and I feel it all the while burning deeper and deeper.

I thought I stood by a great river of melted lava, and while I was wondering from what mountain or vast abyss it came, suddenly the field of my vision was extended to the distance of several hundred miles, and I perceived that, instead of springing from a single source, this rolling torrent of fire was fed by numerous tributary streams, and these again by smaller rivulets. And what do you think I heard and beheld, as I stood petrified with astonishment and horror! There were hundreds of poor wretches struggling and just sinking in the merciless flood. As I contemplated the scene still more attentively, the confused noise of boisterous and profane merriment, mingled with loud shrieks of despair, saluted my ears. The hair of my head stood up—and looking this way and that way, I beheld crowds of men, women and children, thronging down to the very margin of the river—some eagerly bowing down to slake their thirst with the consuming liquid, and others convulsively striving to hold them back. Some I saw actually pushing their neighbors headlong from the treacherous bank, and others encouraging them to plunge in, by holding up the fiery temptation to their view. To ensure a sufficient depth of the river, so that destruction might be made doubly sure, I saw a great number of men, and some whom I knew to be members of the church, laboriously turning their respective contributions of the glowing and hissing liquid, into the main channel. This was more than I could bear. I was in perfect torture. But when I expostulated with those who were nearest to the place where I stood, they coolly answered, *This is the way in which we get our living!*

But what shocked me more than all the rest, and curdled every drop of blood in my veins, was the sight which I had of this very distillery pouring out its tributary stream of fire! And O, it distracts, it maddens me to think of it. There you yourself stood feeding the torrent which had already

swallowed up some of your own family, and threatened every moment to sweep you away! This last circumstance brought me from the bed, by one convulsive bound, into the middle of the room; and I awoke in an agony which I verily believe I could not have sustained for another moment.

Distiller. I will feed the torrent no longer. The fires of my distillery shall be put out. From this day, from this hour, I renounce the manufacture of ardent spirit for ever.

DIALOGUE II.

Wholesale Dealer's Counting Room.

Conscience. (*Looking over the leger with a serious air.*) What is that last invoice from the West-Indies?

Rum Dealer. Only a few casks of fourth proof, for particular customers.

Conscience. And that domestic poison, via New-Orleans; and on the next page, that large consignment, via Erie Canal?

Dealer. O, nothing but two small lots of prime whiskey, such as we have been selling these twenty years. But why these chiding inquiries? They disquiet me exceedingly. And to tell you the plain truth, I am more than half offended at this morbid inquisitiveness.

Conscience. Ah, I am afraid, as I have often told you, that this is a bad business; and the more I think of it, the more it troubles me.

Dealer. Why so? You are always preaching up industry as a Christian virtue, and my word for it, were I to neglect my business, and saunter about the hotels and steam-boat wharves, as some do, you would fall into convulsions, as if I had committed the unpardonable sin.

Conscience. Such pettish quibbling is utterly unworthy

of your good sense and ordinary candor. You know, as well as I do, the great difference between industry in some safe and honest calling, and driving a business which carries poverty and ruin to thousands of families.

Dealer. *Honest* industry! This is more cruel still. You have known me too long to throw out such insinuations; and besides, it is notorious, that some of the first merchants in our city are engaged, far more extensively, in the same traffic.

Conscience. Be it so. "To their own Master they stand or fall." But if fair dealing consists in "doing as we would be done by," how can a man of your established mercantile and Christian reputation sustain himself, if he continues to deal in an article which he knows to be more destructive than all the plagues of Egypt?

Dealer. Do you intend, then, to make me answerable for all the mischief that is done by ardent spirit, in the whole state and nation? What I sell is a mere drop of the bucket, compared with the consumption of a single county. Where is the proof that the little which my respectable customers carry into the country, with their other groceries, ever does any harm? How do you know that it helps to make such a frightful host of drunkards and vagabonds? And if it did, whose fault would it be? I never gave nor sold a glass of whiskey to a tippler in my life. Let those who will drink to excess, and make brutes of themselves, answer for it.

Conscience. Yes, certainly *they* must answer for it; but will that excuse those who furnish the poison? Did you never hear of abettors and accessaries, as well as principals in crime? When Judas, in all the agony of remorse and despair, threw down the thirty pieces of silver before the chief priests and elders, exclaiming, *I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood*—they coolly answered, *What is that to us? See thou to that.* And was it therefore nothing to them? Had they no hand in that cruel tra-

gedy? Was it nothing to Pilate—nothing to Herod—nothing to the multitude who were consenting to the crucifixion of the Son of God—because they did not drive the nails and thrust the spear?

O, when I think of what you are doing to destroy the bodies and souls of men, I cannot rest. It terrifies me at all hours of the night. Often and often, when I am just losing myself in sleep, I am startled by the most frightful groans and unearthly imprecations, coming out of these hogsheads. And then, those long processions of rough made coffins and beggared families, which I dream of, from night-fall till day-break, they keep me all the while in a cold sweat, and I can no longer endure them.

Dealer. Neither can I. Something must be done. You have been out of your head more than half the time for this six months. I have tried all the ordinary remedies upon you without the least effect. Indeed every new remedy seems only to aggravate the disease. O, what would not I give for the discovery of some anodyne which would lay these horrible phantasms. The case would be infinitely less trying, if I could sometimes persuade you, for a night or two, to let me occupy a different apartment from yourself; for when your spasms come on, one might as well try to sleep with embers in his bosom, as where you are.

Conscience. Would it mend the matter at all, if, instead of sometimes dreaming, I were to be always wide awake?

Dealer. Ah, there's the grand difficulty. For I find that when you do wake up, you are more troublesome than ever. Then you are always harping upon my being a professor of religion, and bringing up some text of Scripture, which might as well be let alone, and which you would not ring in my ears, if you had any regard to my peace, or even your own. More than fifty times, within a month, have you quoted, "*By their fruits ye shall know them.*" In fact, so uncharitable have you grown of late, that from the drift of some of your admonitions, a stranger would think me but

little, if any, better than a murderer. And all because some vagabond or other may possibly happen to shorten his days by drinking a little of the identical spirit which passes through my hands.

Conscience. You do me bare justice when you say, that I have often reprov'd you, and more earnestly of late than I formerly did. But my remonstrances have always been between you and me alone. If I have charg'd you with the guilt of hurrying men to the grave and to hell, by this vile traffic, it has not been upon the house-top. I cannot, it is true, help knowing how it grieves your brethren, gratifies the enemies of religion, and excites the scorn of drunkards themselves, to see your wharf covered with the fiery element; but I speak only in your own ear. To yourself I have wish'd to prove a faithful monitor, though I have sad misgivings, at times, even with regard to that. You will bear me witness, however, that I have sometimes trembled exceedingly, for fear that I should be compelled, at last, to carry the matter up by indictment to the tribunal of Eternal Justice.

To avoid this dreadful necessity, let me once more reason the case with you in few words. You know perfectly well, that ardent spirit kills its tens of thousands in the United States every year; and there is no more room to doubt that many of these lives are destroyed by the very liquor which you sell, than if you saw them staggering under it into the drunkard's grave. How then can you possibly throw off blood-guiltiness, with the light which you now enjoy? In faithfulness to your soul, and to Him whose vicegerent I am, I cannot say less than this, especially if you persist any longer in the horrible traffic?

Dealer. Pardon me, my dear Conscience, if under the excitement of the moment I complain'd of your honest and continued importunity. Be assured, there is no friend in the world, with whom I am so desirous of maintaining a

good understanding as with yourself. And for your relief and satisfaction, I now give you my solemn pledge, that I will close up this branch of my business as soon as possible. Indeed, I have commenced the process already. My last consignments are less, by more than one half, than were those of the preceding year; and I intend that, when another year comes about, my books shall speak still more decidedly in my favor.

Conscience. These resolutions would be perfectly satisfactory, if they were in the *present tense*. But if it was wrong to sell five hundred casks last year, how can it be right to sell two hundred this year, and one hundred next? If it is criminal to poison forty men at one time, how can it be innocent to poison twenty at another? If you may not throw a hundred fire brands into the city, how will you prove that you may throw one?

Dealer. Very true, very true—but let us wave this point for the present. It affects me very strangely.

Conscience. How long, then, will it take to dry up this fountain of death!

Dealer. Don't call it so, I beseech you; but I intend to be entirely out of the business in two or three years, at farthest.

Conscience. Two or three years! Can you, then, after all that has passed between us, persist two or three years longer in a contraband traffic? I verily thought, that when we had that long conference two or three months ago, you resolved to close the concern at once; and that, when we parted, I had as good as your promise, that you would. Surely you cannot so soon have forgotten it.

Dealer. No; I remember that interview but too well—for I was never so unhappy in my life. I did almost resolve, and more than half promise, as you say. But after I had time to get a little composed, I thought you had pushed matters rather too far; and that I could convince you of it,

at a proper time. I see, however, that the attempt would be fruitless. But, as I am anxious for a compromise, let me ask whether, if I give away all the profits of this branch of my business to the Bible Society, and other religious institutions, till I can close it up, you will not be satisfied?

Conscience. Let me see. Five hundred dollars, or one hundred dollars, earned to promote the cause of religion by selling poison! By killing husbands, and fathers, and brothers, and torturing poor women and children! It smells of blood—and can God possibly accept of such an offering?

Dealer. So then, it seems, I must stop the sale at once, or entirely forfeit what little charity you have left.

Conscience. You must. Delay is death—death to the consumer at least; and how can you flatter yourself that it will not prove your own eternal death? My convictions are decisive, and be assured, I deal thus plainly because I love you, and cannot bear to become your everlasting tormentor.

DIALOGUE III.

At the Retailer's stand.

Conscience. Do you know that little half-starved, bare-footed child, that you just sent home with two quarts of rank poison?

(Retailer hums a tune to himself, and affects not to hear the question.)

Conscience. I see by the paper of this morning, that the furniture of Mr. M. is to be sold under the hammer to-morrow. Have I not often seen him in your tap-room?

Retailer. I am extremely busy just now, in bringing up our ledger.

Conscience. Have you heard how N—— abused his family, and turned them all into the street the other night, after being supplied by you with whiskey?

Retailer. He is a *brute*, and ought to be confined in a dungeon six months at least, upon bread and water.

Conscience. Was not S——, who hung himself lately, one of your steady customers? and where do you think his soul is now fixed for eternity? You sold him rum that evening, not ten minutes before you went to the prayer meeting, and had his money in your pocket (for you would not trust him) when you led in the exercises. I heard you ask him once, why he did not attend meeting, and send his children to the Sabbath-school; and I shall never forget his answer, "Come, you talk like a minister; but, after all, we are about of one mind—at least in some things. Let me have my jug and be going."

Retailer. I know he was an impudent hardened wretch; and though his death was extremely shocking, I am glad to be rid of him.

Conscience. Are you ready to meet him at the bar of God, and to say to the Judge, "He was my neighbor—I saw him going down the broad way, and I did every thing that a Christian could do to save him?"

Retailer. (*Aside.* O that I could stifle the upbraidings of this cruel monitor.) You keep me in constant torment. This everlasting cant about *rank poison, and liquid fire, and blood, and murder*, is too much for even a Christian to put up with. Why, if any body but Conscience were to make such insinuations and charges, he would be indictable as a foul slanderer, before a court of justice.

Conscience. Is it *slander*, or is it because I tell you the truth, that your temper is so deeply ruffled under my remonstrances? Suppose I were to hold my peace, while your hands are becoming more and more deeply crimsoned with this bloody traffic. What would you say to me, when you come to meet that poor boy, who just went out, and his drunken father, and broken-hearted mother, at the bar of God?

Would you thank your conscience for having let you alone while there was space left for repentance ?

Retailer. Ah, had honest trader ever *such* a conscience to deal with before ? Always just so uncompromising—always talking about the “golden rule”—always insisting upon a moral standard which nobody can live up to—always scenting poverty, murder, and suicide in every glass of whiskey, though it were a mile off. The truth is, you are not fit to live in this world at all. Acting in conformity with your more than puritanical rules, would starve any man and his family to death.

Conscience. Well, here comes another customer—see the carbuncles ! Will you fill his bottle with wrath, to be poured out without mixture, by and by, upon your own head ? Do you not know that his pious wife is extremely ill, and suffering for want of every comfort, in their miserable cabin ?

Retailer. No, Mr. E. go home and take care of your family. I am determined to harbor no more drunkards here.

Conscience. You mean to make a distinction then, do you, between harboring those who are already ruined, and helping to destroy such as are now respectable members of society. You will not hereafter tolerate a single *drunkard* on your premises—but—

Retailer. Ah, I see what you are aiming at ; and really, it is too much for any honest man, and still more for any Christian to bear. You know it is a long time since I have pretended to answer half your captious questions. There's no use in it. It only leads on to others still more impertinent and puzzling. If I am the hundredth part of that factor of Satan which you would make me, I ought to be dealt with, and cast out of the church at once ; and why don't my good brethren see to it ?

Conscience. That's a hard question, which they, perhaps, better know how to answer than I do.

Retailer. But have you forgotten, my good Conscience,

that in retailing spirit, I am under the immediate eye and sanction of the laws. Mine is no contraband traffic, as you very well know. I hold a license from the rulers and fathers of the state, and have paid my money for it into the public treasury. Why do they continue to grant and sell licenses, if it is wrong for me to sell rum?

Conscience. Another hard question, which I leave them to answer as best they can. It is said, however, that public bodies have no soul, and if they have no soul, it is difficult to see how they can have any conscience; and if not, what should hinder them from selling licenses? But suppose the civil authorities should offer to sell you a license to keep a gambling-house, or a brothel, would you purchase such a license, and present it as a salvo to your conscience?

Retailer. I tell you once more, there is no use in trying to answer your questions; for say what I will, you have the art of turning every thing against me. It was not always so, as you must very distinctly remember. Formerly I could retail hogshead after hogshead of all kinds of spirits, and you slept as quietly as a child. But since you began to read these Reports and Tracts about drinking, and to attend Temperance meetings, I have scarcely had an hour's peace of my life. I feared that something like this would be the effect upon your nervous temperament, when you began; and you may recollect that I strongly objected to your troubling yourself with these new speculations. It now grieves me to think that I ever yielded to your importunity; and beware that you do not push me to extremities in this matter, for I have about come to the resolution that I will have no more of these mischievous pamphlets, either about my store or tavern; and that your Temperance Agents may declaim to the winds and walls, if they please.

Conscience. I am amazed at your blindness and obstinacy. It is now from three to five years since I began to speak (though in a kind of indistinct under-tone at first)

against this bloody traffic. I have reasoned, I have remonstrated, and latterly I have threatened and implored with increasing earnestness. At times you have listened, and been convinced that the course which you are pursuing, in this day of light, is infamous, and utterly inconsistent with a Christian profession. But before your convictions and resolutions have time to ripen into action, the love of *money* regains its ascendancy; and thus have you gone on *resolving, and relapsing, and re-resolving*: one hour at the preparatory lecture, and the next unloading whiskey at your door; one moment mourning over the prevalence of intemperance, and the next arranging your decanters to entice the simple—one day partaking of the cup of the Lord at his table, and the next, offering the cup of devils to your neighbors—one day singing,

“All that I have and all I am,
“I consecrate to Thee;”

and the next, *for the sake of a little gain*, sacrificing your character, and polluting all you can induce to drink! O, how can I hold my peace? How can I let you alone? If you will persist, your blood, and the blood of those whom you thus entice and destroy, be upon your own head. Whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, I shall not cease to remonstrate; and when I can do no more to reclaim you, I will sit down at your gate, in the bitterness of despair, and cry, *Murder! MURDER!! MURDER!!!*

Retailer. (Pale and trembling.) “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.”

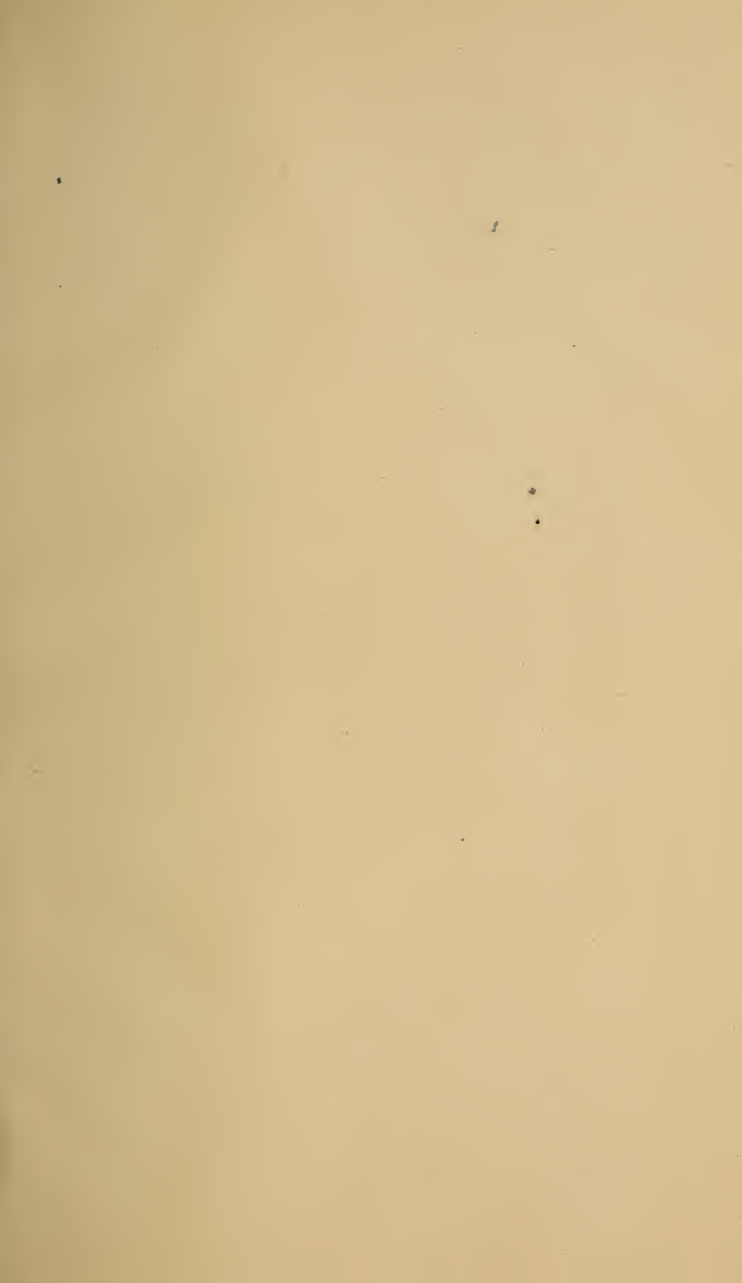
PUBLISHED BY THE

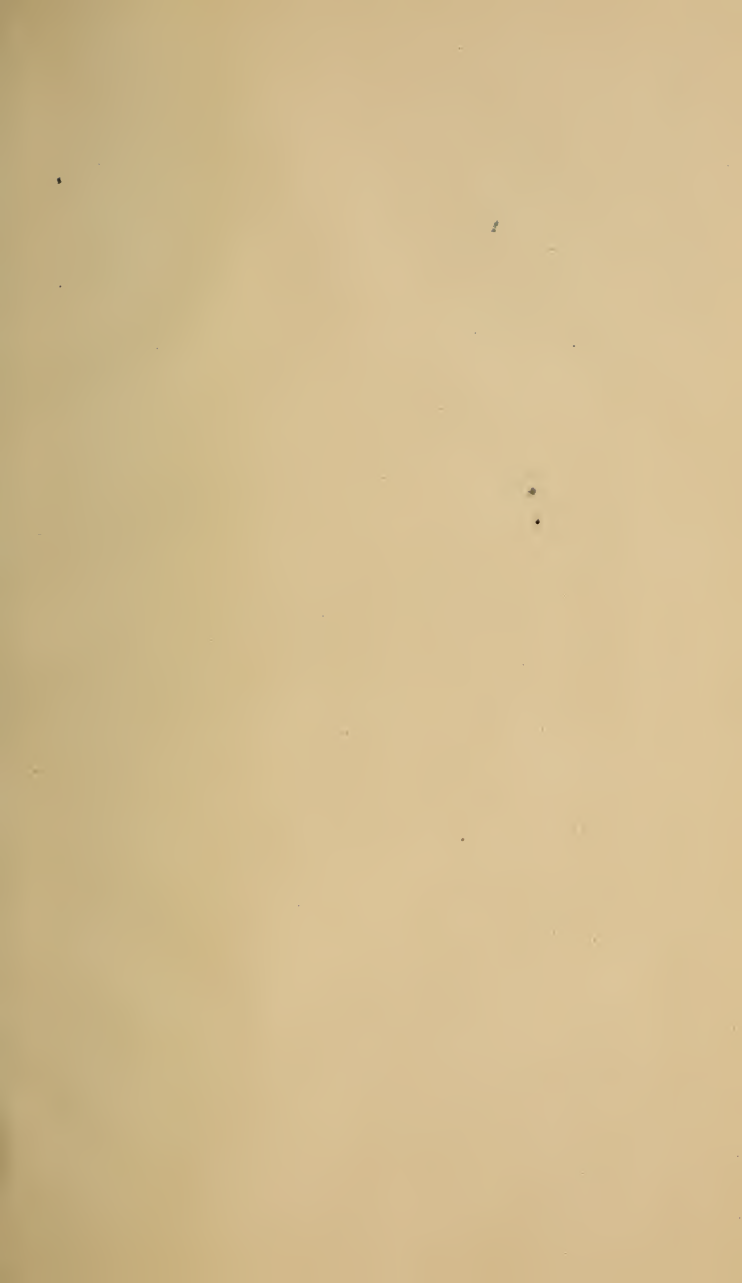
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

No. 150 Nassau-street, New-York.











LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 021 048 030 4

